

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

[00114] A communication method is based on a communications standard such as, for example, asynchronous transfer mode (ATM), that defines a cell format 110 with a standard header 5 of a standard length  $M$  (for ATM, five octets). The method involves forming an *abbreviated* header 2 of length  $m < M$ , and sending a cell 100 including the abbreviated header 2 over a communications medium. In one example, the length of the abbreviated header 2 is two octets, which is substantially less than the five-octet length of a conventional ATM header 5, thus substantially reducing the proportion of cell overhead and increasing communications throughput capability.